

Four-year status for UT-Dallas, UT-Permian Basin;
degree-granting status for UT-Pan American-Brownsville
(SB 895 Harris/Cain)

DIGEST: SB 895 would have allowed two branches of the University of Texas System -- UT-Dallas and UT-Permian Basin -- to expand to four-year institutions. It also would have required the UT System Board of Regents to develop UT-Pan American-Brownsville into a degree-granting institution by 1996. Provisions related to all three institutions would have been contingent on approval by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

UT-Dallas could have begun admitting freshmen and sophomores for the 1990 summer term. By 1992 enrollment would have been capped at 2,000 freshmen and a total of 5,000 lower division students. Admission policies would emphasize selection of students interested in pursuing natural science, mathematics or engineering degrees, reserve 5 percent of the targeted enrollment for minority students and allow additional undergraduate students to be admitted if they were sophomores transferring from a community college in the Dallas or Collin County Community College District. The bill would have limited the Legislature's spending of general revenue for the expansion to \$500,000 for each year of the next biennium. It would have taken effect Sept. 1, 1989, with the enrollment provisions taking effect May 16, 1990.

Beginning in the fall 1991 semester, UT-Permian Basin could have offered four-year undergraduate programs for students majoring in engineering and energy-related sciences. Resources for any such programs would have been divided equally between the main campus in Odessa and the Center for Energy and Economic Diversification in Midland.

GOVERNOR'S
REASON
FOR VETO:

SB 895, providing for the reorganization of the the University of Texas at Dallas as a four-year school, was amended by the Senate to include two additional universities, the University of Texas at Brownsville and the University of Texas of the Permian Basin. I do not support the reorganization of these two additional universities.

RESPONSE:

Sen. Ike Harris and Rep. David Cain, the Senate author and House sponsor of SB 895, reportedly were disappointed by the veto but recognized it as a lack of support for the other institutions involved, not UT-Dallas. Rep. Cain's office said that it was looking forward to working during the special session on a bill that would expand UT-Dallas only.

A statement issued by Sen. Hector Uribe, who had offered in the Senate Education Committee the amendment to SB 895 to grant degree-granting status to UT-Pan American-Brownsville, said: "The governor wants educational excellence in Dallas and I want it in the Valley. Dallas is already home of a half-dozen four-year universities with some of the strongest engineering programs in the state. I'm not anti-Dallas, I'm pro-Lower Rio Grande Valley. In fact, I'd say that I'm more in favor of educational excellence and opportunity throughout the state than the governor is. He seems to be focused on the Dallas/Fort Worth area; all I want is not to be left out when the improvements are passed around. I wish the governor would start acting like the governor of all Texas instead of acting like the mayor of Dallas."

NOTES:

The House Research Analysis of SB 895 appeared in the May 25, 1989 Daily Floor Report.

The original version of SB 895 pertained to UT-Dallas only. The provision regarding UT-Pan American-Brownsville was added in the Senate Education Committee by Sen. Uribe. The UT-Permian Basin expansion was added on the Senate floor by Sen. John Montford.

During the first called session, Gov. Clements added the subject of "enrollment of freshmen and sophomore students at the University of Texas at Dallas" for consideration by the Legislature. The Legislature enacted HB 42 by Cain, F. Hill, et al., which is identical to the UT-Dallas provisions in SB 895, with an additional prohibition against spending any public funds on the expansion until its approval by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.